

Meeting Notes

April 6, 2001

9:30 – 12:30

Attendance

Council Members:

Gretchen White, Chair, Department of Transportation
Mary Carr, alternate for Reg Clark, Washington Association
for Pupil Transportation
Liz Dunbar, Department of Social and Health Services
Glen Hallman, Consumer Representative
Michael Harbour, Washington State Transit Association
Allan Jones, alternate for Thomas Kelly, Office of the
Superintendent of Public Instruction
Marlaina Lieberg, Consumer Representative
Doreen Marchione, Hopelink, representing CTA-NW and the
Washington Association of Community Action
Agencies

Legislative Members:

Staff Members:

Jim Erlandson, ACCT	Cathy Silins, WSDOT
Debra Mendoza, ACCT	Gordon Kirkemo, WSDOT
Don Chartock, ACCT	Jeanne Ward, ACCT

Welcome and introductions

Gretchen White welcomed everyone to the meeting. The council and audience members introduced themselves. Audience members were encouraged to join the discussion at any point.

Meeting notes from ACCT February 2, 2001

The council approved the February 2, 2001 meeting notes.

Debriefing on the earthquake – were special transportation needs people disproportionately affected?

Gretchen opened the floor to anyone wishing to share his or her experience during the 6.8 earthquake that occurred on February 28, 2001. Doreen Marchione expressed how well people came together to provide necessary transportation. The Transportation Building held up very well structurally, although the contents of the building were strewn about. Photos of the building were displayed and included in the meeting packets. Marlaina Lieberg mentioned that Sound Transit had a huge amount of destruction to portions of their building, but customers continued to get served. Marlaina pointed out that the fire procedures used for evacuating people in wheel chairs do not work during an earthquake. She also mentioned that the Boeing Company is now looking at purchasing evacu-chairs, which would enable people to be transferred to the chair, and wheeled down stairs.

Budget and Legislative Session Update *Cathy Silins & Jeanne Ward*

The Senate's current law budget provides the ACCT Program with the same level of funding as in the current biennium. This includes \$750,000 base with some additional dollars for administrative support, totaling a little over \$850,000. The Washington State Department of Transportation's Commission's budget, which was submitted in the fall, identified additional needs for ACCT. The investment strategy called for \$9.5 million for community grants and the implementation of coordinated community systems. This information was also included in the report to the legislature in January. Cathy has met with 85% of the members of the Transportation Committees in the House and in the Senate. She has been talking with them about the financial needs of ACCT. She has not seen anything yet on a new law proposal but will continue working with members across the street. A handout of the Public Transportation Programs was included in the council meeting packets.

An advocacy coalition has mounted a campaign to get the legislature to commit a third of any new transportation funding to "choices". Choices would include transportation options other than highways, such as transit systems, van pools, ride sharing, bike paths, Transportation Demand Management Programs, Commute Trip Reduction Programs and other options. The coordinated transportation program and services that support it are also included in the choices definition. There is mixed response among legislators to this campaign.

A major constraint on the "choices" initiative is in the state constitution. Money generated from the gas tax must be spent on highway purposes. If the legislature settles on a new law budget that is funded only out of a potential raise in the gas tax,

this limits significantly our ability to fund any of the choices projects. An additional funding source is needed to fund non-highway programs. If we do get additional money for ACCT, it will have to come from a new law budget. Every legislator with whom Cathy has spoken, has understood the need for providing funding for ACCT and special needs transportation. It is the financial part of it that they are struggling with.

Jeanne stated that our June ACCT meeting will primarily focus on the budget (if it has passed) and what to do with whatever money we have. There will be some difficult choices to make if we don't get more than the \$900,000. We have been providing support to Counties as they have formed coalitions and planned coordinated systems. They are reaching the point of implementing their systems, and that is expensive. A lot of momentum and work that has been put in to developing systems at the community level will be lost if we can't carry them to the next step. However, the progress they have made in terms of forming partnerships and dealing with their transportation issues will serve the community well, regardless of what happens.

What is the status on some of our bills?

Jeanne reported on the status of some of the bills that she has been following:

SHB 1596 – Allows for the establishment of a public transportation benefit area just to serve special transportation needs.

This has passed the house and senate and is ready for a floor vote. If this passes it will allow communities that don't currently have transportation benefit areas to create one specifically for special needs transportation and to tax their community in order to provide services.

SB 5112 – Creating greater standards for transporting children.

This bill is dead.

SB 5224 – King Street Station Redevelopment

This has passed and is going to the Governor for signature. This is very exciting for DOT. This does exactly what we support. It creates a multi-modal transportation hub. This allows for greater coordination and efficiency of service.

SB 5739 – Addressing the transportation needs of people with special transportation needs. This is the bill, which was requested by the ACCT Council.

This bill is dead.

Cathy reminded the council that when the ACCT budget is discussed, it is important to realize that ACCT is supported by state agencies, in addition to what is in the ACCT budget. In this biennium, ACCT has been able to give almost its entire appropriation to communities in the form of grants, because DSHS and DOT have picked up the staff costs. In addition, state agency staff have spent time working on ACCT issues. One of the successes of the ACCT program is the partnerships that have been generated, not only in the state but also between the state and federal government and between state agencies. The Workfirst Transportation Initiative Team has been successful at securing federal dollars for transportation projects. The ACCT budget is a coordinated budget.

Gretchen emphasized the importance of our stakeholders and legislators understanding our success in getting significant financial support from others.

Glen also pointed out that there should be some recognition of the local communities and various state agencies that voluntarily donate a lot of their time and work towards ACCT programs.

Community Transportation Network beyond Transit and School Buses *Doreen Marchione*

According to the Community Transportation Association of America, there are an estimated 75 million people at risk of being unable to provide or afford their own transportation and who are likely to be dependent upon others for their mobility. This includes seniors, people with disabilities, children, and the low-income. Lack of transportation prevents people from accessing health care, jobs, child-care, educational opportunities, and numerous other functions and services necessary to live an independent and self-sufficient life and to be an active member in the community. The Community Transportation Network begins where the public transit, school bus, and private auto end. It is a network of community-based organizations and services. It may encompass for-profit, non-profit, and governmental entities; all working to increase mobility, with a focus on individuals with special transportation needs.

Washington State Association of Community Action Agencies (WSACAA)

The purpose of the WSACAA is to support the Community Action Agencies around the state in providing vital human services to low income individuals and families.

There are thirty-one Community Action Agencies in the State of Washington serving all 39 Washington counties. For the past 35 years these agencies have served hundreds of thousands of people and moved them to self-sufficiency. Twenty-seven of these are private non-profit organizations and four are public, mostly county

organizations. All of these agencies provide multiple services and receive federal, state, and local funding.

Community Transportation Association of the Northwest (CTA-NW)

The purpose of the CTA-NW is to support specialized transportation providers and to advocate for the mobility needs of riders by:

- Providing education and technical assistance;
- Promoting professional growth, and establishing and maintaining professional practices;
- Promoting effective communication and interaction among CTA-NW members and related organizations, agencies and groups and;
- Advocating for adequate resources to meet the mobility needs of riders.

CTA-NW is comprised of non-profit organizations, public transits, for profit transportation providers, state agencies, suppliers, and individuals. The Association membership is a broad representation of many that build a Community Transportation Network. They fund, broker, advocate, use, provide, and/or plan for transportation services.

One of the best examples of community transportation is the DSHS Medicaid Brokerage structure. During the fiscal year dating July 1, 1999 to June 30, 2000, DSHS Brokers were responsible for brokering 2,033,224 trips. 35% of these trips were provided on Public Transit, 6% were provided by a privately owned vehicle, 1% by commercial carriers such as train, airline, bus, & ferry, and 58% provided by local community transportation providers. The community transportation network provides the flexibility needed to address the individual needs of a rider in a cost effective manner.

Other programs that are served by community transportation providers include Head Start, Job Access & Reverse Commute (JARC), Welfare to Work, training, and child care. They also provide private transportation for hospitals, senior centers, and other programs that serve transit dependent people regardless of income.

Senior Services of King County is a volunteer program that provides volunteer drivers throughout King County to transport senior citizens who are non-Medicaid eligible to medical care or nutrition programs.

The Community Transportation Network, along with the Community Action Agencies, is providing a vital service to transit dependent people all over the state.

ACCT Coordination Grants

Jefferson County

Jim Erlandson introduced Anna McEnery the Developmental Disabilities Coordinator for Jefferson County Health and Human Services.

Anna is the manager for the ACCT coordination grant in Jefferson County. The Jefferson County ACCT Coalition has met eight times since April 2000. There have also been four articles in the press regarding coordinated transportation in Jefferson County. Representatives from various agencies attended the first community coalition forum.

The coalition has developed a mailing list of fifty people. Over the last eight months the local ACCT meetings have brought together varied groups of agency people to discuss how transportation penetrates most agency issues and boundaries.

The strongest interest is in job access for low-income individuals and accessibility for people in the more isolated portions of Jefferson County.

The Jefferson County ACCT group has created a core list of essential ACCT participants and representatives. They have created a memorandum of understanding, a communication plan, guiding principles, and meeting ground rules to support the coalition's structure.

Many key people involved in the local ACCT group have also been involved in the Work First partnership. They have a contract with the Community Transportation Agency of America (CTAA) to survey all modes of transportation within Jefferson County and create an inventory matrix as well as develop community models for the coordinated transportation system. Some of the things that CTAA will be doing are as follows:

- A detailed inventory
 - collecting as much data as possible on existing transportation services
 - equipment used in delivering those services
 - human resources involved in service delivery
 - approximate cost of providing the services
 - identifying the service gaps
 - community testimony, supporting improved transportation service
 - projections for transportation need
 - existing coordinated initiatives
 - barriers perceived in preventing coordination between any two providers of transportation service
 - current driving training practices and potential for coordination
 - current vehicle maintenance practices in potential for the coordination.
- Outline of financial resources that are currently dedicated to transportation in Jefferson County.

- Research various coordination models for consideration

Three coordination models have been proposed. The goal is to: optimize current services and resources, focusing on the existing and projected need; integrate agency and public transportation services forming a system of links between the individual passenger's origin and the county's major trip generators or destination; maintain or improve existing public transit passenger service; expand to include more providers and more types of service; and incorporate flexible links for employment transportation, providing service to employers whose locations and shift times are beyond the parameters of the current fixed routes.

The local workgroup participated in applying for the 2000 JARC grant. Jefferson County did not receive the grant. However, the ACCT workgroup did a remarkable job in bringing together many agencies to create a common bond. They have reapplied for the 2001 JARC grant. Jefferson Transit under the new general manager has taken the lead on this.

One of the biggest challenges is getting certain agencies to come to the coordinated transportation table. It has been difficult getting school districts on board. The Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) is beginning to work with them more directly. They are meeting with the superintendents of each school and the pupil transportation managers.

Pend Oreille County

Jim Erlandson introduced Kelly Scalf, representing the Pend Oreille County Coalition. Kelly gave an overview of the history of Pend Oreille County. She mentioned that the providers had put together a transportation services brochure that is divided into categories of how transportation would be used. Pend Oreille County has identified the task of putting together a similar but more expansive brochure that would also be available electronically. They are still continuing to build their coalition.

Marlaina Lieberg recommended that the brochures also be available in a non-glossy paper stock and in larger print, at least 16-point font, so that the older population with visual disabilities are able to read it.

A survey was conducted on all three of the northeast counties. It was sent to every postal customer. People were asked what they thought was the greatest transportation need? People living in the north have a need to come to Newport and Colville. People in Southern Pend Oreille County, the Newport area primarily, have a need to go in to Idaho and Spokane.

The coalition will seek to meet community needs, applying for grants to prove services and coordinating existing services.

Contract close out and preparation for next biennium

Jim Erlandson stated that he is very excited about the progress that is being made by the ACCT counties.

There are three things that have been requested of counties in the first phase of the ACCT coordination grants:

1. Initiate and maintain wide partnerships in the form of a special transportation needs coalition.

Most have met this requirement satisfactorily. They are operating, integrated and broad enough to truly represent the community.

2. Conduct a complete community inventory and assessment.

This is a major task, especially in some communities that have urban areas as well as rural areas. Most of the community grants are making significant progress in their inventory and assessment.

3. Select a coordination model and begin design of a coordinated system.

What is the next step?

We need to continue to support the county coalitions and the implementation of their chosen system. For example, Spokane is looking at being able to develop a broad-based GIS and information system that helps them identify where the people, employers, medical services, and existing routes are.

Many communities are considering brokerage systems with centralized call taking, trip arranging, and dispatching.

Pierce County is looking at coordinating ADA and Medicaid services as a first step toward a community system.

Demonstration Grants

Mason, Pierce and Thurston Counties all have school/community coordination demonstration grants. The partnerships that have developed between the school districts, public transportation, public transit, human service agencies, and private employers, have been very successful.

Jim gave an overview of the expended dollars for the current biennium. He stated that by the end of June, which is the end of the contract period, all of the coalitions expect to use the coordination grant dollars that have been allocated.

PACT Forum updates

Automated Trip Planner *Don Chartock*

The web based trip planner would allow anyone with access to the website to input their current location, their destination and any special transportation needs and then receive transportation options for their trip, including how to make connections.

Washington DC currently has the best trip planner in the country. There are also ones in Europe that extend across countries. King County is implementing one. Thurston County is also in the process of developing one. ACCT is exploring the statewide trip planner, as an opportunity to increase coordination and provide assistance to people with special transportation needs.

Staff attended a demonstration in Oregon. Oregon is planning to take a layered approach. The first layer would be GIS based, inter-city connections in Washington and Oregon with links to all of the transit agencies, Greyhound and Amtrak. Other layers, including some of ACCT's main interests, would come later.

There is the 511 effort going in at King County and perhaps elsewhere. 511 is a nationally sponsored telephone line that will serve as a transportation information line similar to 911, but for transportation purposes only.

Don mentioned that Map Quest also has a feature that will display transit stops and day care centers.

Marlaina expressed her concern with the difficulty in reading public transit schedules for someone who is visually impaired. She mentioned that Map Quest however, provides a text version that can be printed out for a driver or printed as a Braille copy. This is very valuable. She recommends that these critical details, which web access can provide, not be over looked. Marlaina expressed a strong interest in being involved with the development of the automated trip planner.

We wish to assure that all of these technological benefits are coordinated: website accessibility; the 511 telephone line; the trip planners developed independently by transit systems; and the ability of sight impaired people to access the service.

Jeanne extended an invitation to all who would like to attend the automated trip planner meeting scheduled for May 9, 2001, 1:30 – 3:30 in the Large Commission Board Room. This will include a presentation from Oregon and will follow-up with a

discussion on what, we as a state, can do in order to participate. We will need to get an idea on how much it will cost, who will take the lead, and what kinds of things we will need to do. Transit systems are in the first phase. Therefore the initial focus will be on the transit systems. Other types of providers will get on board soon after. Additional requested functions will be implemented in increments. This will be the kick off meeting for Washington to really become involved.

There will also be a focus on how this will be used by state agencies. People who work with clients can use this system to assist their clients.

Jeanne recommends that a feature be included that is compatible with the Transportation Demand Management goals. We should look at ways to eliminate trips by having information available on services that can be delivered to the home.

Washington Transportation Initiative/JARC

Janet Abbett gave an update on the Washington Transportation Initiative. The projects that were funded under the 2000 grant have finally been given the authority to go ahead. They can now start implementing their services.

The 2001 JARC applications are due on April 9th. The WTI team, representing five state agencies, will be reading all of the applications during the next several weeks. They will be announcing the projects that have been selected by the first week of May. These projects should be in place by this summer.

To fund the projects, the WTI team sought and obtained a two million dollar Congressional earmark of FTA funds. The Workfirst partnership had committed the required two million dollars in match. However, short falls in the Workfirst budget caused them to reduce the two million match to one million dollars. If we cannot find another source of match, the four million dollars in total funds will be reduced to two million dollars. We can only access our earmarked funds to the extent that we have match. Janet explained that we are hoping to at least fund the first year of the selected projects. The second year will be contingent on their performance and availability of match. We will seek restoration of those funds. We will also look for other sources of match.

Jeanne stressed the importance of finding match so that we can make full use of our congressional earmark. We won't get another earmark if we don't use this one. We requested an earmark for 2002. Of the fifteen DOT requests for earmarks, four are still alive, one of them being our three million requested earmark. Our congressional delegation likes our coordinated approach to job access.

Other Items for Discussion

Jeanne mentioned that there is a Medicare non-emergency transportation issue that everyone needs to be aware of. There is a movement to get funding for Medicare transportation other than ambulance transportation. Currently Medicare only pays for transportation when it is provided by ambulance. This results in high cost trips or no trips. If non-emergent transportation becomes a benefit under the Medicare Program, it will create another categorical program that will need to be dealt with in terms of coordination and how services are provided at the state level. Jeanne will keep the Council informed on what is happening with this issue.

Meeting adjourned

Next regular council meeting

Friday, June 1, 2001
9:30 – 12:30

DOT Commission Board Room (1D22)
310 Maple Park Avenue, SE
Olympia, Washington 98504-7387

For questions regarding grant administration, policy and council activities, contact Jeanne Ward, ACCT Administrator, at 360-705-7917 or wardje@wsdot.wa.gov . For information on meetings, agendas, materials, and clerical issues, contact Debra Mendoza, ACCT Secretary, at 360-705-7911 or Mendozd@wsdot.wa.gov .
